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## "Is There a Literal Hell or is Hades only a Myth?"

The Rev. Charles T. Russell Preaches on His Beliefs and is Answered by the Rev. M. P. Hunt.

Every floor of Macauley's Theater was crowded Sunday afternoon, March 25, to hear Charles E. Russell, of Allegheny, Pa., preach on "To Hell and Back." Dr. Russell is pastor of the Church of the First Born in Allegheny, and has a following in Louisville, with headquarters at 2220 Portland avenue. Dr. B. A. Garr, a Portland avenue physician, is one of the elders of this local church, and presided over the meeting Sunday afternoon. The other elder of the church is Dr. Walter Bell. The membership consists of twenty-six persons, and they meet bi-weekly.

Dr. Russell holds the belief that there is no hell, that the Scriptures teach no eternal torment, and that all Biblical references to Sheol or Hades, the Hebrew and Greek words translated into hell, should instead be translated into grave or tomb. Incidentally he believes the human race will be awakened from death seven thousand years from the creation of man, which is only a few centuries distant. He believes in a personal devil, who shall be annihilated at the beginning of the millennium, and that heaven consists of the Garden of Eden as it existed before the original sin of Adam, and that all spirits will return to life in flesh and blood; the saints, who are excepted, will be personally with God and Jesus in spirit form. The large crowd listened attentively to Dr. Russell, and as they passed out of the theater they were greeted with a strident voice of a young man saying, "Hear the Rev. M. P. Hunt at Twenty-second and Walnut to-night. He will tell you there is a hell, a real hell."

### CHURCH OF FIRST BORN.

Dr. Russell delivered a lecture Sunday afternoon at Macauley's Theater, Louisville, on the "Resurrection." The teachings which he promulgated are expounded every Sunday afternoon and Wednesday evening at the headquarters on Portland avenue.

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ers on Portland avenue. He was asked after the service what the name of his Allegheny church is, and he answered: "It has no name. We are simply Christians. You may call us 'Church of the Living God,' or anything else you please." Dr. Garr, however, explained that his congregation, which follows the teachings of Dr. Russell, call themselves "Church of the First Born."

Dr. Russell devoted most of the time of his lecture to an explanation of the meaning of the words Sheol and Hades as found in the Old and New Testaments. He said:

"This subject must appeal to all reasonable minds. All heathendom believes in an eternal torment. The Christians got their idea of hell from the heathens during the dark ages, and both got their beliefs from the devil."

### NO SENSATIONAL TREATMENT.

In commencing his lecture, Dr. Russell said:

"Although the caption of my topic has a sensational aspect, I assure you that it is not really so, that I shall treat the subject most

earnestly and prove every assertion most conclusively from the Scriptures. God forbid that I should treat lightly a subject which has caused more distress, more heart ache, more sorrow of mind, than all other subjects combined; caused these distresses to the very best amongst the Lord's followers. I care not to specially address those who are so selfish as to regard merely themselves and their family connections, and who are quite content that all others might suffer an eternity of torture so long as their friends are saved from such a calamity. I would reach especially those whose hearts and heads have been troubled almost to the extent of distraction over this subject—those who have wept and prayed as they remembered sons and daughters, friends and neighbors, parents and children who had died without having accepted Jesus as their Savior, without having taken upon them the only name given under heaven and amongst men whereby we must be saved.

"I hold that it is the best of God's people, the tenderest of heart, the most Christianlike, who have trouble with the question of eternal torment. I know how to sympathize with them because once I had similar distress of mind, and, like others, was obliged to say: 'If I believe this doctrine and meditate upon it it will surely make me crazy, as it has done hundreds and thousands of others.' Such loving hearts have found a palliation but not a relief, not a satisfaction, in the thought that somehow, perhaps, somewhere, at sometime, God's character would be cleared of the dreadful stain cast upon it by this doctrine which we believe to be the teaching of God's book, the Bible.

### ONCE ASHAMED OF GOD.

"I, too, once so believed and feared, and was ashamed of my God because of the injustice, lovelessness, devilishness implied in the theory taught me from infancy, that God, knowing the end from the beginning, had created our race under conditions as we see them; that he provided a great place called hell for their torture, and created a corps of fire-proof devils to attend to the matter, and

provide also fuel enough to perpetuate the torture to all eternity. I felt thankful indeed to realize myself an object of divine mercy and favor, but my heart went out for the thousands of millions of human beings of civilized as well as heathen lands who had gone down into death utterly ignorant of the only name given under heaven and amongst men whereby we must be saved—neither is there salvation in any other."

Dr. Russell then discussed the origin of the belief in an eternal torment, declaring that it first originated during the dark ages.

"Where does your conception of hell come from?" he asked and answered, "From your parents and theirs from their parents. It is simply a tradition. The word of God is interpreted from a false standpoint, but a new dispensation is coming and the mists are rolling away. Infidelity is fostered by the belief in a literal hell."

### NO ETERNAL TORMENT.

"Intelligent people everywhere

are very generally discarding the doctrine of eternal torment as being contrary to reason. But, alas, thinking that it is taught in the Scriptures, these same intelligent people are rejecting the Bible, losing faith in it, drifting into unbelief in general, into Christian Science, spiritualism, theosophy, etc.

"If this evening I shall succeed in proving to you that the Scriptures do not teach this unreasonable theory of eternal torment which is supposed to be built upon its statements—if on the contrary it shall show you that the 'hell' of the Scriptures is logical and reasonable, I shall hope to have planted the feet of some upon firmer ground, to have re-established to some extent faith in the Bible, as the Word of God, and to have prepared your minds to see that as this error is not of Scriptural foundation, so likewise all the unreasonable teachings of the creed of the 'dark ages' are without foundation in the Bible. I hope thus to lay a foundation for your future

growth in knowledge and grace. I could not possibly ask for you of the Lord a greater blessing than has already come to my own heart and life through better knowledge of the Scriptures along these lines.

"I will endeavor to give you Scriptural proofs that the hell of the Bible is not a place of torment at all; that the word refers to the state of death, the tomb, the grave. I shall show you that the Scriptures teach that both the good and bad alike go to the biblical hell, the tomb, and that their hope of salvation is a resurrection hope—to be delivered from the power of death by the Redeemer in God's due time.

"You are all aware that the Old Testament portion of the Bible was written in Hebrew language and the New Testament in the Greek. We will commence with the Old Testament. We find that the word 'hell' everywhere throughout the Old Testament is a translation of the Hebrew word sheol, which occurs altogether sixty-six times,

[Continued on page 8.]



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